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Soviet Attitude Toward Proposed Sale of AWACs to Saudia Arabia

- I. The Soviets oppose the sale of the AWACs to Saudi~~a~~ Arabia, viewing it as part of Washington's broader effort to strengthen its strategic position in the Persian Gulf region. Their rhetoric has been fairly routine and subdued, however.
- A. The Soviets have been trying to court the Saudis as well as other Gulf nations in recent months, and they presumably do not want to offend them needlessly.
- B. Soviet criticism of the sale has focused on US intentions, alleging that the US is trying to harness Saudi Arabia to its regional policies.
1. The Soviets assert that the sale will lead to an increased US military presence in the region and to the use of Saudi Arabia as a base for the RDF.
 2. They charge that the US is trying to force Saudi Arabia to assume Iran's role as protector of US security interests in the area.
 3. They say that the terms of the deal are insulting because the US feels

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the need to constantly reassure
Israel and to restrict the use of
the AWACs.

II. The Soviets certainly would see the failure of the US
to carry through with the sale as a positive development,
undermining US-Saudi relations.

A. They would not expect the Saudis to turn to
them for arms or even to upgrade relations in
the immediate aftermath of such a failure.

B. They would hope, however, that over the
longer term a continuing deterioration of US-
Saudi relations would lead the Saudis to
improve relations with the Soviet Union--perhaps
starting with the exchange of diplomatic
missions, a long-sought Soviet goal.

C. The Soviets certainly would exploit the sale
in the Arab world, arguing that Israel has a
"veto" over US policies.

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